



To: Kareem Dale
Rachana Bhowmik
Fr: Elizabeth Davis
Date: 8 January 2009
Re: Transition Team Meeting Follow Up

The Convergence of Emergency Management and Special Needs Issues

As previously mentioned, I want to thank you for your clear and strong commitment to the important issues briefly touched on during the January 2 meeting convened in DC. These are very exciting and busy days and with so many issues to focus on, I am please the new administration values the human impact so highly. Thank you also for the opportunity to provide a few thoughts.

As requested, I have listed the issues mentioned that required a follow up reference. Each listing is an abbreviate outline only. These are provided with an eye to the most immediate 30-, 60-, 90-day action items.

- **Safe Centers:** Currently up and running in the states of Florida and Alabama several newly constructed senior centers were designed specifically for a dual purpose. These could be shovel-ready very quickly.
 - When necessary, the by-day senior center transforms into the community safe shelter for the seniors and others in need of refuge.
 - The design and construction took into account the hazards (in these locations hurricanes) and include hardened features such as uninterrupted power supplies, food, durable medical equipment, etc.
 - The staff members are also trained to become shelter staff during operations.
 - This concept is replicable and with minor design changes based on local hazard analysis and thus useful in most areas of the US.
 - The concept is not limited to senior centers but could be a parks department facility, a day care center, etc.
 - Points of contact:
 - Michael Weston - who originally outlined the concept
westcots@aol.com;

- Irene Collins, Executive Director of Alabama’s Department of Senior Services who also chairs the FEMA NAC Special Needs Committee Irene.collins@adss.alabama.gov;
 - Georgianne Cherry, a public health preparedness planner for the Florida Department of Health Georgianne_Cherry@doh.state.fl.us .
- **Tax Relief and Credits:** Recognizing that especially in these difficult financial times, we have priced many Americans out of preparedness, replicating one of several existing or proposed tax reliefs encouraging ordinary people to take actions for themselves, their families, and their communities will increase capacity to self-sustain during a disaster.
 - Exempting prefabricated go-bags and individual preparedness items at set times.
 - Example can be found in New York State for a proposed bill <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=A11206> .
 - Providing a tax credit for specific forms of emergency volunteerism.
 - Example can be found from Pennsylvania <http://www.pasenategop.com/reform/emergency.htm>
 - Tax credit for those victims of disaster who receive certain aid.
 - Example found in Georgia http://www.legis.state.ga.us/legis/1999_00/leg/fulltext/hb1327.htm
- **Appropriate Staffing and Parallel Structures:** Post Katrina Legislation (HR 5441) established a position in DHS of the National Disability Coordinator (NDC) and the post was placed in FEMA with the Equal Rights Office.
 - The responsibilities envisioned by the legislation far exceed the capabilities of a single individual as is now the case.
 - On December 5, 2008, FEMA Director Paulison in a letter accepted the recommendation of his National Advisory Council (NAC; also established in the same legislation) to establish additional support within all ten FEMA regions in the form of a Regional Disability Coordinator (RDC). However these positions will not be funded until FY 2011. A new administration could identify immediate funding to support this structure.
 - A new administration could also encourage or mandate that each of the FEMA Region Administrators establish a Regional Advisory Council (RAC) as many have done and ensure a Special Needs Subcommittee as Region II Administrator Steve Kempf, Jr. recently announced.
 - Similarly, looking to states such as California, Florida, and Virginia, a new administration could encourage or mandate that the Governors of all states appoint a State Disability/Special Needs Coordinator.
 - And with at least the NDC and the RDC a new administration could ensure the most qualified individuals are selected for these posts by setting a qualification standard with the assistance of both representatives of professional emergency management as well as the special needs community. These posts must be administrative with the real-world experience to be deployed to the field

- **Executive Order:** Executive Order 13347 signed by President Bush on July 22, 2004 is a good start at ensuring people with disabilities in particular (however by implication other special needs groups as well) are taken into account in all aspects of emergency planning.
 - It also established the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) chaired by the Secretary of DHS to oversee federal agency coordination.
 - A new administration could acknowledge the goals of this EO and then improve upon it so as to continue the momentum and set measure marks to reach.
 - Current contact is the designated chair of the ICC, Daniel Sutherland the DHS Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Daniel.sutherland@dhs.gov .

- **Functional and Medical Support Shelter (FMSS):** The Target Capabilities List describes the capabilities related to the four homeland security mission areas: Prevent, Protect, Respond, and Recover. The current version of the TCL contains 37 core capabilities.
 - A key component required but not currently included is the Functional and Medical Support Shelter.
 - Nearly two years of work by a vast group of practitioners and advocates working together produced a core concept and working document.
 - A new administration could champion the need to put forth very aggressive and progressive guidance on shelter standardization for special needs populations and reexamine the FMSS document [see attached file for additional information].

- **Promising Models of Agencies Planning for Special Needs Populations:** During the meeting, a few specific agencies were highlighted for their extemporaneous efforts.
 - Within HHS, the Administration on Aging has spent years working to increase the resilience capabilities of its entire network of senior services down to the very local department for the aging. Point of contact is Edwin Walker Edwin.walker@aoa.gov .
 - Always set apart from its federal counterparts is USDA for its progressive commitment to the employees and guests in agency building who have special needs during disaster. Over the years this has included an impressive list of physical planning tools, computer notification software, redundant plans, and most notably the assignment of a Special Needs Advisor as a direct report to the Incident Commander during an activation. Best resource person: Bruce McFarlane – who held this position for almost 15 years before his very recent retirement from public service - bamconsulting@verizon.net

The above bullets represent the points from the meeting dialog that required further reference as requested. They are also actionable in a short period of time. Obviously there are many more issues, policies, solutions, collaborations around the core topic that can be taken on by the new administration. If you feel I can provide further assistance I am more than willing to make myself available (as has been the case during this past administration). I can offer to direct you to those within the government sector and/or

private sector who can most meaningfully assist, and to facilitate other helpful networking efforts, i.e., in my role as Chair of the IAEM Special Needs Committee I interact with a wide spectrum of emergency managers on an ongoing basis.

My focus has always been on providing the best possible emergency management services for the people who can benefit most. Thank you for this extraordinary opportunity to share my insight with the people who will lead our nation.

Respectfully submitted.